



CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NEWS RELEASE

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Avon Mountain 'Runaway Truck' Ramp on Route 44 to Open

Project #004-0128

The Connecticut Department of Transportation (DOT) announced today that the 700-foot Avon Mountain Truck Escape Ramp on Route 44 will be operational by Friday, February 22, 2008 (weather permitting).

This project is being completed under a \$2.8 million contract by Bourgeois & Shaw, Inc., of Simsbury, Connecticut, under the direction of the DOT's District 4 Construction Office. Work began November 19, 2007.

Governor M. Jodi Rell commended the DOT for so quickly awarding and completing the project, which proceeded under an emergency declaration in the wake of a serious, non-fatal truck accident at the intersection of Routes 44 and 10 in Avon on September 7, 2007. An earlier truck accident at the same intersection on July 29, 2005, killed four people.

"Truck safety has been a top priority of mine since becoming Governor and it is especially gratifying that the DOT has been able to move this project along so quickly while at the same time minimizing traffic disruption," Governor Rell said.

Acting DOT Commissioner Emil H. Frankel noted that this is the first such ramp ever built in Connecticut.

The project had a very aggressive work schedule that included construction of the entire truck escape ramp structure and shoulders along Route 44. This escape ramp includes construction of retaining walls, concrete barrier curb and a state-of-the-art *Dragnet Vehicle Arresting Barrier System*. The system uses a series of fiber arresting nets and cables that are attached to self contained energy absorbing units that are designed to safely stop a vehicle. Although the ramp will be open by Friday, some minor final work, such a line striping that is "temperature restrictive," remains to be done; that is expected to be completed by April 30, 2008.

Following the September crash, the State Traffic Commission, composed of the Commissioners of the Departments of Transportation, Motor Vehicles and Public Safety, approved a temporary ban on "through trucks" weighing more than 13 tons on that stretch of Route 44. With the opening of the ramp, the ban will be lifted.

The truck ramp project affected five private properties along Route 44, two of which were purchased in their entirety by the DOT to provide the proper right of way for the ramp. The other three property owners will be compensated appropriately for the pieces of their property required for the project.

Traffic Operations

Motorists can expect lane closures at all times, in either direction along this section of Route 44 until the contract completion date of April 30, 2008.

At least one lane in either direction will be available at all times.

*Construction signs and Local Police will be utilized for traffic control.
Motorists are advised to reduce their speed accordingly through the work zone.*